

**Save the Children Armenia Field Office**

**Study of Evolution, Status and Support Needs of  
Civic Action Groups in Armenia**

**by**

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## **Acknowledgments**

This evaluation studies the evolution, status and needs of Community Action Groups (CAGs) created from 1996 to 2002 in two programs managed by Save the Children's Armenia Field Office with funding by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). CAGs were created in the Community Development Program (CDP) and subsequently used in the current Public Works Program (PWP).

This evaluation was lead by Dr. Valery Patsiorkovsky and his team consisted of two interviewers, Syuzan Badeyan and Varduhi Tovmasyan and a driver, Karen Bagdasaryan, who also acted as a guide. All of the research team was contributed to data collection, analysis and writing the final report. In addition, the research team would like to give thanks to Irina Saghoyan and Reza Hassan for their help in identifying team members and assisting with research design. Larry Dershem assisted the research team in writing-up their findings.

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## **Acronyms & Names**

**AFO** – Armenia Field Office

**CAG** – Community Action Group

**CBO** – Community Based Organization

**CDP** – Community Development Program

**Gyugapet** – Head of Village Council

**IDP** – Internally Displaced Person

**LTD** – Limited Liability Company

**Marz** – Region

**Marzpet** – Regional Governor

**NGO** – Non-governmental Organization

**PWP** – Public Works Program

**SC** – Save the Children

**USAID** – United States Agency for International Development

**VAT** – Value Added Tax

## **I. Executive Summary**

From 19 March to 3 April 2003, 74 CAGs and almost 130 CAG members from both the Community Development and the Public Works programs, implemented in five Marzes, were interviewed and participated in focus groups regarding the evolution, status and needs of CAGs. In addition, 28 public officials were interviewed on the same topics. Specifically, 25 in-depth interviews were taken with members CAGs, representatives of local bodies of authority, public organizations and SC's Armenian field officers. Along with these in-depth interviews, 10 focus group discussions were conducted with members of CAGs.

The evaluation team estimated that 90% of the 300 CAGs formed over the last seven to eight years still exist today. Of these CAGs, 50% regularly meet but are inactive, 30% regularly meet and are maintaining their original project, with 20% regularly meeting, implementing a new project or have registered as some type of legal entity (NGO, Cooperative or LTD.)

The overwhelming major of CAG members declared that it is essential to cooperate with local authorities and officials. In rural areas this cooperation occurs with the Gyugapet (Head of Village Council) is a CAG member. In urban areas this occurs when a town council member is also a CAG member. In both rural and urban areas further cooperation occurs with the local authorities providing the CAG and the project in-kind contributions, such as loaning trucks and drivers to transport materials, providing idle pipes for irrigation projects, or linking the CAG to various departments (e.g., Department of Education).

Moreover, since the beginning of the CDP, approximately 90 CAG members have gone on to become elected officials. They have been elected to positions such as Gyugapet (Head of Village Council), members of village council, town council, and Mayor due to their experience and recognition of implementing a successful project in the CDP.

When asked what makes a CAG successful, there was generally a consensus that CAG member must 1) be respected in the community and interested in the project, 2) have some former education or experience related to the project, 3) the CAG Coordinator should have demonstrated capabilities in organizing, motivating, and project implementation, 4) there is a accepted "division of labor and responsibility" among CAG members, 5) local officials are informed and to some degree involved, 6) there is the support of the broader community because it required voluntary contributions of all members, and 7) when project deals with social services, especially health and education, it is important to have professional women in these areas involved.

The needs identified by CAG members were having 1) another project to implement to keep the momentum going, 2) information on various sources of funding, 3) improved skills in proposal writing and fund-raising techniques, 4) training in financial management, 5) a minimal amount of office space, supplies and equipment, 6) legal consultation, 7) courses in accounting or bookkeeping, 8) computer skills, 9) methods of working with local and central government, 10) lessons in strategic planning, 11) a better understanding of international standards and exchanges, 12) trainings in conflict resolution, 13) small-business development, and 14) how NGOs can provide services which either private, government, or international organizations are willing to pay for.

Of the recommendations made, those that ought to be emphasized are that some projects need to address issues that are larger than simply neighborhoods or only one community. Although these types of projects are more expensive, long-term development will require project that foster the growth of inter-community socio-economic ties related to marketing, trade, and

social service delivery. This could be initiated with the creation of inter-community development boards comprised of multiple CAGs with local officials. Together they could discuss and identify realistic projects for larger-scale projects.

## **II. Objectives of Study**

### ***A. Background***

As part of the USAID-funded Caucasus Emergency Humanitarian Assistance Program, which operated from 1995 to 2000, SCF implemented a countrywide Community Development Program (CDP). The program was implemented in nine Marzes (out of total eleven Marzes) in Armenia. The objectives of the \$4.6 million CDP program, funded by USAID, were to stimulate local civic action and self-help initiatives that address the urgent needs of communities. The mechanisms used to achieve these objectives were micro-projects implemented by Civic Action Groups (CAG). In total over \$3 million USD was spent for implementation of 373 micro-project at the average budget of \$8,250.

Since October 2000 the Armenia Field Office (AFO) has commenced a three-year Public Works Project (PWP) funded by USAID under its Social Transition Program. Through the PWP, SCF has supported 33 communities in disadvantaged areas of Yerevan and 6 rural Marzes of Shirak, Lori, Tavush, Gegharkunik, Vayots Dor and Syunik to address critical social and health infrastructure needs. In PWP, communities are assisted in identifying and prioritizing their needs, selecting a project, which they will take responsibility for implementing and elect CAG to act on their behalf. Moreover, the PWP includes short-term paid labor, identified by the CAG, to complete community projects.

Projects have ranged in value from \$12,000 to \$99,000 and include projects such as kindergartens, sports centers, arts schools, water supply systems, irrigation systems, hospitals and public bathhouses. As mentioned above, one feature in which the PWP differs from the CDP is that laborers from vulnerable households within the community are paid for their work on the projects, although the work of the CAG is voluntary.

### ***B. Objectives of Study***

For slightly less than 10 years, SC has been utilizing CAGs for as the primary mechanism for mobilizing community members to identify, prioritize and resolve local problems in Armenia. CAGs were elected from the community and entrusted to manage the implementation of projects as well as the maintenance of the projects completed. SC provided various types of trainings to these CAGs, such as PRA techniques, problem identification and ranking, project planning, financial management, monitoring and maintenance systems.

For almost the past ten years 350 CAGs have conducted numerous community needs assessments, prioritized problems, developed action plans, implemented micro-projects and maintained these projects. To complete these efforts CAG members have needed various resources such as knowledge, skills, and financing.

All these community development projects were done in a difficult socio-economic context. Since its independence in 1991, Armenia has experienced high unemployment and poverty, out-migration to countries abroad, degradation of social services and its basic infrastructure.

Due to this situation, CAGs in both the CDP and PWP worked on projects primarily related to basic needs and infrastructure in their community. For example, almost 75% of all micro-projects in the CDP rehabilitated drinking water or irrigation systems, and in the PWP almost 80% of the projects dealt with the rehabilitation or development of new social services. Overall, the CAGs have been considered successful in the community development process and the development of civil society as a whole. However, to date, understanding the changes that have occurred over time with the CAGs and their needs remains mostly anecdotal.

To provide a more systematic understanding of the evolution, status and needs of CAGs in Armenia, SC commissioned a study in March 2003. Thus, the following report presents the findings of the study that examined the evolution, status and needs of CAGs groups in Armenia.

### **III. Methodology**

#### ***A. Sampling***

The unit of analysis for this study is a CAG; that is the group of community members elected by the broader community to implement a project that addresses a critical problem in their community. Of the approximately 300 CAGs formed to date, a total of 74 CAGs were contacted and interviewed during this study, or about 20% of the total CAGs.

In the PWP to date, a total of 33 CAGs have been formed. Of these CAGs, about 50% were contacted and interviewed for this study.

There is 14 CAGs that have implemented projects in both the CDP and PWP. Of these 14 CAGs 9 were contacted during this study, or 64%.

These 74 CAGs were located in five of the nine Marzes where the CDP and PWP have implemented projects.

There are approximately 300 CAG members in these 74 CAGs (estimated 4-5 people per CAG), of which 131 were formally interviewed (see Appendix) with the remaining CAGs members participating in focus group meetings and open-ended in-depth interviews.

#### ***B. Data collection methods***

Three main types of data collection methods were used in this study: 1) open in-depth interviews, 2) formal interviews and 3) focus group discussions. Open in-depth interviews were conducted with CAG members in which the interviewer used a set of open-ended questions to initiate a discussion. All open in-depth interviews were recorded using small audio recorders and all tapes are archived in SC's library.

Formal interviews involved the use of a questionnaire, containing both closed-ended and open-ended questions. Two formal interview forms were developed. The first formal interview form was designed for CAG members with the second formal interview form designed for use with local officials, such as a school director, Gyugapet, Council Member, Mayor (see Appendix for both formal interview forms).



Focus group discussions were held with CAG members and with community members. All focus group discussions were recorded using small audio recorders and all tapes are archived in SC's library.

In addition, the evaluation team photo-documented many parts of the study. Some of these photos are included in this report.

### *C. Summary of data collection*

Table 1 presents an overview of the Marzes, the fieldwork days, data collection methods and the number of informants. As mentioned earlier, CAGs in five of the nine Marzes, which had either CDP or PWP projects, were contacted. The field research part of the study began on 19 March 2003 and continued until 3 April 2003, for a total of 13 fieldwork days.

**Table 1: Marz, Field days, Type of Data Collection and Number of Informants.**

Marz (travel dates)	Formal interviews		Open in-depth interviews	Focus groups	# of villages/towns	# of CAGs	% of CAGs
	CAG members	Local officials					
Vaiots Dzor (March 19-21)	30	13	9	2	12	23	51%
Gegharkunik (March 24-25)	32	5	5	3	10	17	18%
Lori (March 27-28)	17	4	5	2	10	14	16%
Sunik (March 29-31)	18	5	3	2	4	8	31%
Shirak (April 1-3)	34	1	3	1	7	12	25%
Five Marzes (13 days)	131	28	25	10	43	74	25%

In the 74 CAGs contacted during this evaluation, approximately two CAG members were formally interviewed in each CAG for a total of 131 formal interviews being completed with CAG members. Another formal interview was conducted with 28 local officials, such as mayors, Gyugapets, village council members or school directors.

Twenty-five open in-depth interviews, that lasted between thirty and sixty minutes, were conducted with local officials, CAG Coordinators, and SC's regional project officers.



Ten focus group discussions were held with CAGs. All focus group discussions included two or more CAGs that were clustered geographically nearby each other. Having two or more CAG in one discussion group greatly increased the discussion of issues, perspectives and opinions provided. In general, these focus groups were held with 10 to 12 CAG members participating.

A total of 43 villages or towns in five Marzes are represented in this evaluation. Three of the five Marzes are over represented. This was due to two factors; weather conditions and distance between villages. For example, only 4 villages or

towns were contacted in Sunik because of snow hindering travel and the large distances between the villages and towns. To have a more equal representation of all Marzes would require the evaluation to be conducted at a time of year that allows access to all villages and towns.

## **IV. Findings**

### ***A. Current Status and Effectiveness of CAGs***

#### Existence of CAGs

It is estimated that 90% of the 300 CAGs formed during the CDP still formally exist. This is presumed since, in approximately ten percent of CAGs that the evaluation team tried to locate, they could not find even with the assistance of community local residents and the Gyugapet.

Of the remaining 90% of CAGs, the evaluation team concluded that there are three basic types; 1) formally existing, 2) existing and maintaining their project, and 3) existing and registered.

The first type is those CAGs who have a leader (Coordinator), regularly meet, and continue to discuss community issues and problems. However, these CAGs do not move past discussion to action. The evaluation team estimates that approximately 50% of existing CAGs are in the first category.

The next type, existing and maintaining a project, represents approximately 30% of the CAGs. These CAGs regularly meet together, but they also cooperate with the local officials and beneficiaries to regulate and maintain the project they originally implemented.

The last type of CAG, active and wishing to or have registered as a legal entity, represents the remaining 20% of CAGs. These CAGs regularly meet, maintain their project(s), have obtained outside funding to improve existing project or to implement a new project. Moreover, many of these CAGs have the desire to be a legal entity, such as NGO, LTD or Cooperative. This last category represents the evolution of CAGs as an informal civil society organization into a formal civil and small-business institution.

The evaluation team came across two good examples of the last type of CAGs. One was created by CDP #151. Khachanush Sargsyan who is the Director of College in Yegegnadzor was also the CAG Coordinator. Currently, the CAG is implementing a project and has created an NGO called, "Mountain Flower." Moreover, Khachanush developed her skills in computer graphics and has become recognized internationally for her work. (Her work can view at the following URL address - <http://www.eitp.irex.am/sites/k-sargsyan>.)



The second example of this type of CAG, created under the PWP, implemented a project that rehabilitated the cultural center in Goris. After completing its project, the CAG transformed

into the NGO, “Goris Bumarang.” This NGO provides training for children in journalism and media services.<sup>4</sup>

The primary outcomes of the first two types of CAGs are practical skills in project implementation, personal skills such as negotiation, increased social ties and cooperation, and occasionally CAG members becoming public officials.

The third type of CAGs, not only produce the outcomes similar to the first two types of CAGs, but also generate new employment opportunities related to new social services and business opportunities that are desperately needed in Armenia today.

In summary, the first type of CAGs accomplishes the basic tasks of a CAG. The second type forms the preconditions necessary for long-term issues and development. The third type of CAGs are already solving today many of the crucial problems needed for long-term development. Overall, the efficiency, and overall effectiveness, of CAGs in the third category are much higher than the CAGs of the other two types.

### CAGs and Public Officials

Approximately 30% of all CAGs groups have had at least one member become an elected official, such as Village Head (*Gyughapet*), village or city councils member, school director, or a the head of an NGO or LTD. Almost all of the CAG members who became elected officials came from the 135 CAGs that were active over the years. As stated by one,

*“I was elected a member of the city council; a lot of people voted for me. They voted for me because I was well known in my community due to my activities in the CAG. Also, another member of our CAG was elected mayor.”* [Vaiots dzor, Vaik city]

The opportunity for a CAG member to become an elected official was primarily for men. Of the 24 government officials that were interviewed only one was a woman. Thus, men today most often fill the few government positions available.

Having CAG members who become public officials is increasingly developing the capacity of public institutions since these officials understand, from their experience in the CDP and PWP, the role of community participation, transparency, accountability, and sustainability.



### Composition of CAGs

#### ***Demographic Characteristics***

Almost three-quarters of CAG members participating in this evaluation are men with only one-quarter women. This is not too surprising in that almost 75% of all projects were related to the rehabilitation of the material infrastructure, such as potable water supplies and irrigation systems. These types of project are generally viewed as “male” type of projects since they

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<sup>4</sup> The Director is Khanel Arutunyan, telephone # 2-2862.

involved manual labor. When projects were related to certain social services, such as education or health, the percentage of women in the CAG increased.

Also, women seldom held the highest position with the CAG—Coordinator-- except in certain cases of the project being related to social services. Also, in the 43 villages and towns the evaluation team visited none of them had a women leader, such as a Gyugapet, Mayor or Deputy Mayor. Thus, the evolution of women into leadership positions within civil society, whether in informal CAGs or formal public office, has not changed much over the last ten years. As one public official stated, regarding the role of women and men in official positions, *“All secretary positions are filled by women and they do this work best. It is man’s position to make decisions.”*

The age of CAG members ranged from 25 to 66 years of age, with an average ranging from 40-50 years of age. This shows that many CAG members are in the prime of their employment age years. That is, many middle age residents prefer to be active in their community resolving local problems.

Almost all CAG members are well educated. Two-thirds (66%) of all CAG members in this evaluation had graduated either from a university or an institute, with 20% graduating from various types of technical colleges. A small percentage (13%) had completed secondary school (10 years of education) and only 1 CAG member had not completed secondary schooling. Thus, as in most countries, in Armenia it is generally the better educated those are either elected or volunteer to participate in community activities. Those CAG members that had higher levels of education, had specialties in construction, engineering, and education with fewer in economics, which again were viewed by community residents as relevant skills needed for the projects.

It is also important to point out that virtually all CAG members were married with children. Having children prompted people to get involved in improving the local infrastructure and social services for their family and especially their children’s benefit. This indicates that although the work of the CAG is for the improvement of social life, many people get involved because of personal benefit to their household. Also, it testifies to the benefit of diligent and serious work, which was done through forming active CAGs.

### ***Socio-Economic Status***

The CAGs were comprised of community residents elected by other community members. Traditionally, in most countries, it is the “middle class” that is involved with community development programs and projects. It is not much different in Armenia. However, it must be made clear that the measure for “middle class” is different in each country. Thus, given the high level of poverty in Armenia, socio-economic classes are relative terms. As reported in the “Statistical Analytical Report” the official subsistence minimum level (or poverty level) was 12 019 drams, per capita, in 2001, or the equivalent of \$21.7.<sup>5</sup> Thus, this means that a “middle level of household income” is from 2 to 4 times the subsistence minimum, or approximately 24 000 – 48 000 drams, or the equivalent of \$43 – 85 per month per person.

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<sup>5</sup> Social Snapshot and Poverty of the Republic of Armenia. Statistical Analytical Report. On the Basis of Results of 2001 Nationwide Sample Survey of Households, Yerevan, 2002, pp. 129-130.

Nevertheless, when CAG members interviewed were asked to evaluate their socio-economic status, compared to residents in their community, 79.4% reported to be “middle class.” As reported by one CAG member, but quite representative of many others, *“Now is a difficult economic situation for all people, but compared with other households in my community I estimate my household as mid-level.”* [Sunik, Verishen]

Few of the CAG members estimated their socio-economic status as either “poor” or “above middle.” That is, 16.8% reporting to be “poor” and only 3.8% reporting to be above “middle.” As stated by one CAG member who estimated her household as “poor,” *“The income of my family is below middle. I am the only person in my family who is employed. However, my wages from working in the kindergarten are very low nonetheless I must support three children.”* [Shirak, Gumri], where as one CAG emphatically stated, *“The income of my family is higher than middle...actually much higher than middle. I had a business in Russia and returned here with good money.”* [Gegharkunik, Tsak Kar]

The degree to which having few “poor” residents as CAG members affects the specific needs identified for projects should be examined. However, as most residents stated in the evaluation, the difference between “poor” and “middle” level households is very small. Moreover, most community residents have been complementary of the projects completed.

### ***Cooperation between CAG and government***

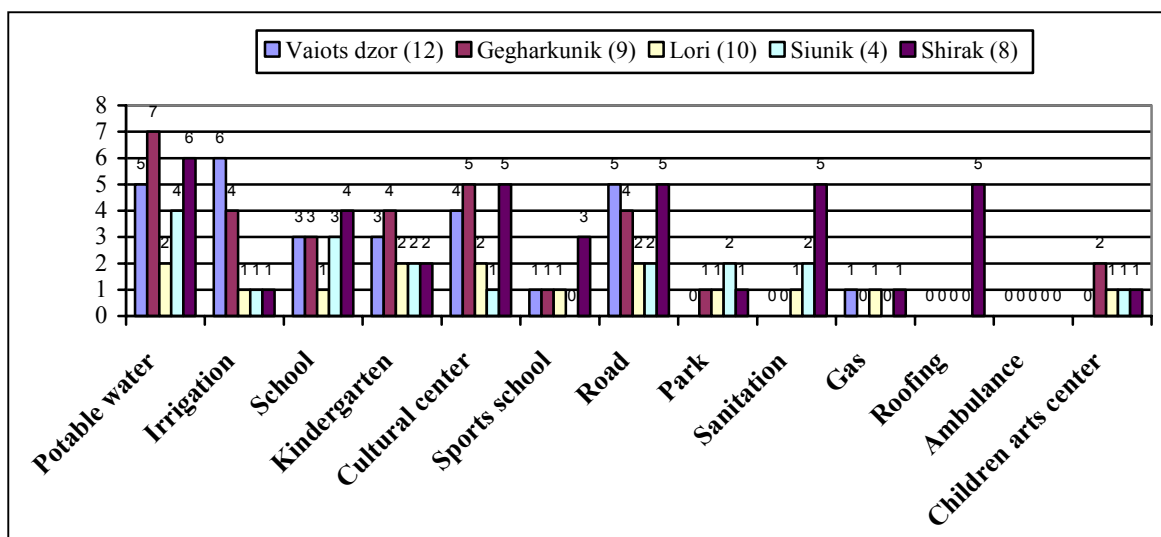
The type of cooperation between a CAG and the local government was generally dependent upon whether the CAG was located in a rural or urban settlement. In rural areas, the Gyugapet was almost always one of the CAG members, but rarely the Coordinator. In urban areas, it was generally a city council member with a specialty in the area of the project being implemented was a CAG member. However, rarely was the Mayor or Deputy Mayor a CAG member.

There are four types of coordination between CAGs and the local government: 1) sharing of project responsibilities and contributions, 2) utilization of government contributions, 3) mobilizing community residents to work on the project whether voluntary or paid, and 4) meeting governmental standards and regulations, such as for a school building which may need approval from the Dept. of Construction and Dept. of Education.

### ***Community Needs***

Graph 1 shows the needs of communities in the five Marzes that were identified in the evaluation (see the table in Appendix C for a more detailed presentation). Thirteen needs were identified. The needs most identified by these communities included irrigation systems, potable water, education (schools & kindergarten), and roads.

**Graph 1: Community Needs by Five Marzes (number of communities in parenthesis).**



The needs of the communities identified during this evaluation have not changed much from the needs of communities addressed by projects in the beginning of the CDP. That is almost 50% of CDP projects implemented between 1996 and 1998 were for potable water, 25% for irrigation systems and 8% for education.<sup>6</sup> This indicates that over the last six to seven years communities confront the same basic and immediate problems, especially related to water in the communities that have received assistance over this period of time. Most likely, the other two-thirds of communities where the CDP and PWP have not been implemented, especially rural ones will have similar needs.

These projects have helped households and communities resolve some of the more basic and pressing needs. However, these projects represent, in a sense, a series of isolated improvements that are unable to collectively increase larger district or regional development, such as economic, employment and social services. The new law in Armenia that recognizes almost 1000 villages, towns and cities as territorial-administrative units of government has tended to emphasize the separation of communities. However, there exists a set of interdependency between communities built upon trade, marketing, and social services. One level of development that is absent are projects that encourage and foster the development of these interdependencies.

### Success of CAG Defined by CAG members

During the interviews and focus groups, CAGs members were asked to identify factors that are important for a “successful” CAG. These included:

1. All members had an interest in the project. That is, CAG members should not be elected just because they are “respected” residents. Most importantly, CAGs members should be both respected residents and have an interest in the project.

<sup>6</sup> Review & Evaluation of the Community Development Program in Armenia, for Save the Children by Larry Dershem, February 1998.

2. The majority of CAG members have training, education or experience related to the project. Because of the high level of human capital (knowledge, skills, experience), there are community residents who can contribute significantly to the success of a project.
3. The CAG Coordinator has good skills in organization, community mobilization and project implementation.
4. That the CAG can develop a good “division of labor and responsibility” among CAG members.
5. The CAG must convince the local officials in the benefit of the project to the community and also coordinate with them throughout the project. Many local officials mentioned that since people view many of the projects as essentially the responsibility of the government, they need to participate in some way and if the project is successful they benefit from a satisfied constituency.
6. In the CDP program, it was especially important to have the support of the broader community because it required voluntary contributions of all members.
7. When project deals with social services, especially health and education, it is important to have CAG members who are professional women that have knowledge and skills in this area.
8. There must be a consensus that the CAG members are respected and trusted community residents.

### **Unsuccessful CAGs**

Issues related to unsuccessful CAGs, in essence, would be the opposite of those issues reported above for successful CAGs. However, CAG members identified additional issues that lead to unsuccessful CAGs, such as bad weather, poor quality materials, transportation and communication problems. Although CAG members identified these last issues as related to an unsuccessful CAG, the evaluation team views these issues as potentially related to an unsuccessful project. Nevertheless, this indicates how closely CAGs connect their success as a group with the success of their project.

#### ***a. CAG Needs Assessment***

1. New project – as mentioned in the evaluation report of the CD program in 1998 referred to earlier, the successful completion of a project is an important factor in the sustainability of a CAG. During this evaluation, many CAG members mentioned that additional projects are needed for them to remain active. The search for funding can take a long-time during which some CAG members become discouraged or disinterested. Some mechanism whereby a CAG can be seeking additional funding while working on a project so as to limited the “down time” would be beneficial.
2. Information on sources of funding – This need is very much connected with the first need identified by CAGs – a new project. Since the CAGs are busy implementing a project they often do not think about, or have time to, search for funding for additional projects. CAG members recognized two types of sources of funding. The first was grants from international organizations. The second was from fees generated from a project, such as water user fees generated from an irrigation project. Another type of funding that was not mentioned by CAGs, but may be advocated by international organizations is that of funds from the central government given to CAGs for projects. Community Block Grants in the US are an example of this type of funding.

As for the first type of funding, international grants, it would be helpful to have a database of international organizations that fund community development programs (if one does not already exist) that is regularly up-dated with details of who can apply, funding amounts, types of projects supported, etc.

As for the second type of funding it would be beneficial to have a handbook that presents various successful projects that were able to generate income for the CAG.

Finally, central government providing funds directly to CAGs for local development would need to be advocated by international organizations with CAG members. This would require the central government to develop a fund specifically for local development. CAGs would apply for these funds and the government would award these funds, on a competitive basis.

3. Proposal writing & fund raising – CAG members suggested more training in proposal writing and strategies for fund-raising. CAG members believe that after completing their first project they have many good experiences to write a proposal themselves but they still need some assistance with the proposal structure, contents and identifying donors.

As for fund-raising, CAG members would like to receive information or trainings in different types of small and large-scale fund-raising techniques that can provide additional support to a project. For example, if a school building was rehabilitated with a grant from SC, to supplement this project with some school supplies or equipment, CAG would like to know if and how it is possible to apply to a local or central budget fund, other donors, or to hold some type of fund-raising event in the community.

4. Financial management – Several of the CAGs that had completed several projects, or had formally registered as a legal entity, identified various aspects of financial management as a need, such as administrative planning, project budgeting, regulations and rules for accounting funds, and documents necessary for audits.
5. Office, supplies and equipment – Several CAGs identified the lack of an office space, supplies and equipment to their effectiveness and long-term sustainability. In some cases the local officials can provide space but generally this office space is unheated and in an appalling condition that is not conducive for work. Also, there is fear that if the CAG rehabilitates this office space, then the local officials may want the office space for their use.

The administration of a project requires basic supplies such as paper, pens and notebooks for keeping minutes from meetings, tracking funds, and monitoring activities. Although relatively inexpensive, for CAGs these expenses add up. And these are on-going costs that may not always be covered by the original grant.

6. Legal consultation – CAG members mentioned that legal consultation is needed for various aspects related to project implementation, especially if the project will generate fees or income. Another time is when CAG would like to know their “rights” in trying to access local resources. For example, many projects are related to water, either for potable water or irrigation. Since water is a social resource, CAGs in implementing a potable water or irrigation project need some legal advice on the “use” of such resources. Finally, legal advice is needed when a CAG is considering transforming itself from an informal group (CAG) to a formal one, such as an NGO or LTD.

7. Special courses on management and accounting – Management and accounting courses are especially needed by those 20% of CAGs that have evolved into legal entities such as an NGO or LTD.
8. Computer skills – At this point in time, most all CAGs keep both administrative and financial aspects of their projects on paper in hand-written form. Many CAGs recognize that for small grants and projects this may be sufficient, however, if they would like to apply for larger grants and implement larger projects, they will need to write the proposal using a computer as well as keep administrative and financial records electronically.
9. How to work with local government – slowly the work of informal CAGs is becoming recognized by local government officials. Many CAGs have impressed local officials in their ability to initiate and conduct local development. However, almost all CAG members mention the importance of having a cooperative relationship with local officials. This is why more often than not the Gyugapet is a CAG member, or the local school director is a member of the CAG in an education project. It would be beneficially to have a workshop on the types of cooperation that have occurred between CAGs and local officials in implementing a project.
10. Strategic planning – CAG members described aspects of strategic planning; that is, they discussed how to understand their weaknesses, strengths and opportunities. They would like to understand how to plan for long-term goals rather than planning for just the immediate short-term project. This is related to the issue of isolated vs. interconnected communities. Planning multi-community or regional development is recognized as a needed long-term issue.
11. International standards and exchange – Several CAGs stated the importance of understanding standards of international donors and organizations in development work and the desire to have some type of learning-exchange with similar groups in other countries that do similar work. This issue was expressed primarily by CAGs that work with internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees.
12. Conflict resolution – Many CAGs implement projects related to improving basic needs. To do these projects generally requires the use of scarce resources, especially water for drinking and irrigation. Many communities, and groups within communities, compete for use of these scarce resources. Thus, CAG Coordinators and members often need skills related to negotiation and compromise, that is, conflict resolution.

Another case when conflict resolution skills are needed is when CAGs work in “created” communities, for example, groups of IDPs and refugees that have been resettled together. Generally, without a history, tradition or kinship relations, cooperation to complete a project requires special knowledge and skills to develop trust and common interests among different groups.

13. State, CAG, NGO and small-business relations – Many CAG members mentioned the important role of CAG groups in the development of civil society. These CAGs are often the “bridge” between the government (both local and central) and the local community, but also private businesses when projects lead to income-generation and/or an employment position. CAG members discussed how they need more information on the role of CAG groups in the development of civil society as a partnership between government, non-government and private business.

14. Paid services of NGOs – CAGs recognize that for the long-term sustainability of the community, income will need to be generated. This often requires that the CAG create a formal entity such as a NGO or LTD that can legally collect fees. This was an issue for projects related to the improvement of the material infrastructure (such as water and irrigation) and social services (such as for family planning center). For example, in the PWP the project Voskehask became a Water Users Association. As stated by a CAG member, *“In our community we created a Water Users Association. This association has resolved the current water problem and will maintain the irrigation system.”* At this time they collect a set fee on a quarterly basis from households per amount of water used.

For social services, under the CDP the project Family Planning Center in Yeghegnadzor, became an NGO offering fee for services, throughout the region, in education in childhood care and individual consultation in family planning.

#### ***b. Lessons Learned***

1. The evolution of CAGs shows that they take different courses. Approximately 10% of CAGs will disband, to some degree, after completing the project for which they came together, with the other 90% of CAGs continuing to formally exist after completing the first project. This 10% of CAGs that disband however should not be viewed, however, as a failure. One reason this is not a failure is that the completion of one project by a CAG that has disbanded has left several of the community members with a valuable experience that may be used at in the future.
2. Currently, of the 90% of CAGs that continue to formally exist, about one-half continue to regularly meet and continue to discuss problems but not maintain their original project. About 30% regularly meet and are cooperating with the local officials and beneficiaries to maintain the project. The remaining 20% of CAGs regularly meet, maintain their project(s), have obtained outside funding to improve existing project or to implement a new project.
3. One of the most prominent needs of CAGs is funding. Currently, most CAGs rely on grants from international donors and organizations. CAGs would like to organize a type of community fund-raising event or fee-for-service, but do to the desperate economic situation local residents do not have the economical means to contribute. In addition, many community residents view the rehabilitation of the material infrastructure and social services as the responsibility of local and Marz government. However, like the local population, these local government bodies often do not have the economic means for this work. Nevertheless, CAGs would like to partner with local government bodies in these projects, whether through in-kind contributions of transportation, materials or cash.
4. The second most important need for CAGs is training. The various types of training considered important by CAG members were fund-raising, legal consultations especially in the area of CAG – government relations, accounting, and international civil society models.
5. Other needs expressed by CAGs included office space, supplies and equipment. Some CAGs mentioned the need for legislation recognizing a formal status for CAGs, such as community based organization (CBOs) found in other countries. This type of status is beneficial for CAGs in that, for example, they would receive exemption from paying VAT. However, this would require CAGs, the international community, and donors to advocate

for a change in current legislation.

6. CAG members, when asked about current and future *community* needs, still identify the improvement of “basic” needs, such as potable water, irrigation, schools and clinics. The resolution of community and household basic needs is important and greatly appreciated. However, without long-term development of economic conditions, it will become difficult to continue to maintain some projects. These types of project focus the efforts of CAGs and international development efforts on immediate household and community needs rather than broader inter-community or regional development efforts. Inter-community development incorporates not only economic aspects but also institutional networks.
7. Of the two programs, the CDP is economically more efficient than the PWP since it does not financially compensate community residents for their work in the project. The PWP program has tried to accomplish broader development issues such as employment and poverty reduction. The CDP is efficient and effective in that this program can resolve urgent problems for the long-term at a minimal cost. The PWP to become as efficient and effective as the CDP, will require more effort at larger regional development and structural change.
8. Local government officials are favorable toward CAG activities and projects. Of the 25 local government officials interviewed in this evaluation virtually all (23) stated they had cooperated with the CAG in the project. When asked to evaluate the project, using a scale of 1 being “poor” and 5 being “great,” twelve local government officials evaluated the project as good (4) and thirteen evaluated the project as great (5).

All 25 local government officials stated that CAGs are an effective and efficient mechanism for identifying and resolving local problems.

It is also important to note that virtually all the local government officials interviewed had graduated with engineering and construction degrees and thus were quite familiar with project planning, design and implementation.

When asked about the current status of CAGs, most of the local government officials had a similar evaluation as reported above by the evaluation team; that is, three types of CAGs exist, 1) merely existing but not active, 2) active and implementing, and 3) active with the desire to become a formal registered entity. Moreover, these local government officials tied these three CAG outcomes with the basic needs of the community. When a CAG is originally formed it is composed of individuals interested and knowledgeable about the area of the project. However, as one community problem is resolved and another one is identified, current CAG members may not be either knowledgeable or interested in the new project. Thus, local government officials state that a new project may require either a new CAG, a method to replace some of the CAG members who are uninterested with people who are interested and skills, and to financially compensate the CAG Coordinator for their time.

9. Women seldom hold formal leadership positions, but nonetheless influence decisions made regarding projects, especially those related to social services due to their knowledge, skills and experience.

## **2. Recommendations**

### **1. *Create a process whereby local and central government can recognize CAGs for their contributions to local development.***

Encouragement of CAGs through some form of recognition can lead to their long-term sustainability. At the present time, most recognition is informal, that is from community residents. However, formal recognition from government officials would give CAGs more motivation and legitimation for their efforts. Formal recognition from the government could be in the form of certificates, publicity or plaques.

Another form of recognition of CAGs and their experiences at local development would be for international organizations to organize trainings for local and central government officials in which CAG members present their projects and the processes involved in community needs assessments, need prioritization, project implementation, monitoring & evaluation, and project maintenance.

### **2. *Development of inter-community development projects.***

Due to the collapse of basic services in communities throughout Armenia, it is not too surprising that CAGs have identified and implemented projects related to just their community's immediate needs. Most CDP projects could be described as *intra*-community development projects that resolve household and local resident problems. This type of development is needed, however, if continued suggests that communities are independent of each other in resolving problems. It is recommended that in the future inter-community development projects be considered that allows several CAGs from neighboring communities to work together on a project that develops inter-community infrastructure, trade or other needs.

Currently, most communities, especially rural ones, are too small and poor to develop long-term economic trade markets and employment opportunities. To develop these types of conditions requires reaching a type of "critical mass" of economies of scale. An inter-community development approach is one step toward obtaining critical mass. To do this it will be necessary to examine natural existing, or potential, economic trade networks in which communities can be clustered together for more sustainable development efforts.

### **3. *A lower maximum number of members in a CAG***

During the in-depth interviews and the focus groups many CAGs members stated that the minimum number of 9 CAG members was too high. From their experience a CAG best operates with 5 to 7 interested members. Generally, this lower size CAG represents those community members who will be active in the project, rather than having a large CAG with some members being inactive.

### **4. *Special research is need on the 50% of CAGs that continue to maintain their project and those that have evolved into registered entities and especially those generating income.***

Special research is needed to better understand the factors, and each factors relative importance, to the overall success of the CAG and its project. This evaluation found numerous factors that influence CAG success, ranging from social, economic, geographical, and psychological.

### **5. *There appears to be a need to emphasize among CAGs members the long-term maintenance of projects as part of their voluntary contribution.***

Many CAG members are willing to be volunteers in the short-term implementation of the project, but are hesitant to commit themselves as volunteers in the long-term maintenance

of a project. This was especially evident among CAGs that had implemented both CDP and PWP projects. CAG members with experience in both programs wonder why they should commit themselves as volunteers to the long-term maintenance of a project when other received payment.

**6. *The success of CAGs appears to be closely associated with cooperating with the community, local officials and donors.***

Cooperation with local government officials is necessary to reduce tensions over “authority” concerns and jealousy on why non-government persons are resolving government responsibilities. Local government officials may be involved formally as CAG members, but also informally as advisors, technical assistants, and “bridges” to other governmental and business resources.

**7. *It would be good to have an annual meeting of CAG members who have been elected to various official positions.***

These people represent those who have practical experience and are most informed on how to develop local and inter-community partnerships for sustainable development. This group could potentially evolve into a policy advisory group to the central government.

**8. *The development of a set of small handbooks that discuss CAG requirements, experiences of most successful CAGs, proposal writing, project planning, financial management, and conflict resolution.***

**9. *The PWP might consider matching worker experience with need skills in Armenia.***

Payment for short-term employment is beneficial for people who need to obtain cash for need goods (food) or services (health care). However, after the project is finished they will generally return to their original state of poverty. The short-term employment opportunities in the PWP need to be viewed as on-the-job training, and thus should be matched with existing employment opportunities. This will have a long-term impact on poverty. Also, the inclusion of younger adults, such as young college graduates that do not have experiences of employment, can assist with long-term poverty reduction.

SC might consider separating, if possible, the two aspects of the PWP. That is, SC could be responsible for the CAG and all of its functions, but the payment of workers would be provided by the government, a multi-lateral donor (e.g., World Bank), or a combination of both.

### 3. Appendix

#### a. Formal Interview Form 1: CAG



**Save the Children Armenia Field Office**  
**Study of Evolution, Status and Support Needs of CAGs**  
**Evaluation Form # 1 for Community group members & Voluntaries**

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Respondent status: \_\_\_\_\_

Respondents NGO experience (years): \_\_\_\_\_

**1. Did the CAGs in your community achieve its mission?**

Yes, no, partly, difficult to answer. Please, write some words about it.

\_\_\_\_\_

**2. Please describe the current status and activities of the CAG in your community?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**3. What factors do you associate with?**

a) Success of your CAG? \_\_\_\_\_

b) Failure of CAG? \_\_\_\_\_

**4. Does your CAG cooperate with various government officials (village, district, region)?** Yes, no, partly. Please, describe how do you do it?

\_\_\_\_\_

**5. Does your CAG cooperate with other NGO in your village, district or region?** Yes, no, partly. Please, describe how do you do it?

\_\_\_\_\_

**6. What type of needs does your CAG and your community still have to become more effective?**  
CAG \_\_\_\_\_

Community \_\_\_\_\_

**Respondent:**

Gender: female, male. Age (years): \_\_\_\_\_ Education (years): \_\_\_\_\_

Specialty: \_\_\_\_\_ Marital status: \_\_\_\_\_ Numbers of family: \_\_\_\_\_

Numbers of children: \_\_\_\_\_ Income status: poor, middle, more than middle.

**b. Formal Interview Form 2: Government Officials**



**Save the Children Armenia Field Office**  
**Study of Evolution, Status and Support Needs of CAGs**  
**Form # 2 for gov't officials, community leaders & international organizations**  
(who have been involved in the CD and PW programs or both)

Location: \_\_\_\_\_  
Respondent status: \_\_\_\_\_  
Respondents experience (years): \_\_\_\_\_  
Which program do you involve CD or PW? (circle one or both)

**1. Did you cooperate with the CAGs?**

Yes, no, partly. Please, describe how do you do it? \_\_\_\_\_

**2. In your judgement, how would you estimate the efficiencies and effectiveness of CAGs in your community on a scale of 1 to 5? (from 1-lowest to 5-highest)**

-----1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----

**3. Do you think the program has achieved its objective? Yes, no, partly.**

Please, write some words about it. \_\_\_\_\_

**4. What factors would you associate with success or failure of CAGs?**

Success \_\_\_\_\_

Failure \_\_\_\_\_

**5. Were the CAGs effective (yes, no, partly) Please describe how and why looking at:**

Assessing the needs of communities \_\_\_\_\_

Mobilizing communities to meet needs \_\_\_\_\_

**6. What are the current status and the activity level of the CAGs in the community?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**7. In your opinion, what type of assistance the CAGs needs now to function effectively?**

\_\_\_\_\_

**8. Could you please compare the two CD and PW programs in the following areas?**

Community willingness \_\_\_\_\_

Timeliness \_\_\_\_\_

Outcome (project, attitudes, behaviors) \_\_\_\_\_

**Respondent:** Gender: female, male.

Education (years): \_\_\_\_\_

Age (years): \_\_\_\_\_

Specialty: \_\_\_\_\_

***D. In-depth Interview (3.04.2003) with a Save the Children Project Manager.***

**Interviewer:** Tell, please, about methods used by Save the Children to implement the various community projects.

**Respondent:** We begin from visiting the local Mazpetaran. Here we receive a general picture of the socio-economic conditions in the Marz. Next, we go to the actual communities in the Marz and make our own rapid appraisal of the socio-economic situation. An assembly of a community is called, during which we present a list of various problems that the Marz and we have identified during the rapid appraisal. The members of a community place the rank the various problems from the least to the worst problems. Then, the community residents votes and selects most problem and then community residents that will form a "civil action group" (CAG) to resolve this problem. Most often, the community recommends the CAG be comprised of the most active, authoritative, and educated members in the community.

**INTERVIEWER:** You mention that the CAG is comprised of the most active members of a community, however, in our discussions with CAGs they stated: "What good are active people if they do not have a basic understanding or experience in construction? You must understand, we must coordinate the construction of an irrigation of system, which first of all requires that some CAG members be experts. "

**RESPONDENT:** You are certainly right, in that the CAGs need the experts be elected also, but I think that this is not so important qualification of man as his authority. You see the main function CAG is to manage the performance of the project by workers, such as the quality of delivered materials, timeliness of deliveries etc. Another important function of the CAG is the timely and appropriate contribution of a community. To successful obtain the community contribution the authority of the CAG member is very important not only among the members of a community, but also among local authorities. I try to always emphasize that we understand "legitimate" authority not "criminal" authorities; those people who listen to the opinions of other people.

Furthermore, we acquaint the CAG with their duties and functions that should be performed by them. During the project the CAG gets practical experience of how to work together and experience in making decision regarding social problems in the community. In case of successful and harmonious work we advise the CAG not to lose this potential, which generally acquires the project to be transformed into a public organization and allows it to continue its activities on a higher level.

**INTERVIEWER:** It is very important to us to learn about other activities of CAGs. Do you have information on what portion of CAGs continue their activities on a higher level, such as an NGO, LTD etc.?

**RESPONDENT:** From the information available to me, approximately 70% of CAGs wish to be transformed to any other structure and to continue their activities. However, the basic obstacle they confront is the difficulty in paying the expenses related to official registration. Therefore the sustainability of a CAG often depends on the presence of one of its members having a private(individual) business. Their experience and the financial opportunities in many respects provide the further opportunities and activities for CAGs.

The members of community frequently are involved in the functions of the CAG under their own initiative. Originally, these community members were not CAG members, but the idea of accomplishment a project so interested them that they volunteered to be included in the CAG's work and this promoted the successful outcome of the program. Actually, the successful

completion of the project and the activities of the CAG have promoted the mobilization of the community as a whole.

**INTERVIEWER:** What other factors, based on the experience you have had in your position, promote the successful sustainability of a CAG?

**RESPONDENT:** I think that the inclusion of local authorities in the CAG is very productive, especially in rural communities. These local authorities include the Gyughapet, other workers of the Gyughapet. In urban areas this include officials from appropriate departments of the Mayor. These officials have administrative experience, which is an extremely important in CAG activity. Also, these people bring legal literacy that can assist in the organization of further CAG activities. For example, the CAG coordinator in the village of Gaghar (Lori Marz) is the Chief of Local Authority. Thus, the CAG in this community created the “Cooperative Society for Joint Processing of Own Sites of Ground” was created. This cooperative has increased agricultural productivity.

**INTERVIEWER:** From your viewpoint, does the type of project implemented by a CAG influence if it is transformed to other structures and continues its activity?

**RESPONDENT:** In my view, CAGs that tend to implement projects that rehabilitate sports schools most often transform themselves. This is most likely due to the sports societies (clubs) have continued and CAGs have not started their activities from zero. For example, the CAG in Vaghanadzor rehabilitated a sports school that stimulated the activity of an existing NGO, which was nominally registered and did not conduct any activities. The activity of the CAG during the project made them active also, which has inhaled new life in the NGO. At the present time this NGO has contacted various international donors for financial support of this sports school.

Also, other projects are very productive to make the CAG sustainable. Fro example, there is the project in the village of Ghagar. The project repaired the Children's Creative Centre, which is very productive. This is due, most likely, to the CAG members are very creative people.

**INTERVIEWER:** What is you opinion about how Save the Children should further direct its activities?

**RESPONDENT:** I think that for today the basic problem in Armenia is the absence of employment. Projects that create more or less long-term employment will be the most welcomed. For example, the project in the village of Kaches, which repaired the mechanization in a village, resulted in employment of community members through maintaining these machines, and has ensured (supplied) the entire village with mechanization. Another example is the repair of a Sports School, which has resulted in an increased interest among people to use it, and thus will increase of the salaries of trainer's, and also to increase new exercise instructions, thus promoting creation of new workplaces.

I want to note, that most successful projects are those that have formed a ”trinity” cooperation between the CAG, Save the Children and local authorities. This trinity leads to real results.

**INTERVIEWER:** In your opinion, what is required today for a CAG to more effectively complete their functions and activities?

**RESPONDENT:** I believe that organizing trainings for CAG members is very important. We have already this experience. We organized regional trainings in Tashir Lori marz), which not

only have ensured the participants with essential knowledge, but we also promoted personal dialogue between the members various CAGs, exchanged experiences, and facilitated cooperation between them.

### ***E. Focus Group Discussion with CAG Members in Yeghagnadzor.***

19.03.03.

Number of the participants: 11

Gender: Men - 10, Women - 1

In this focus participants were CAG members who had completed three projects in Yeghagnadzor. These projects were 1) the construction of an irrigation of system, 2) repair of apartment roofs, and 3) the rehabilitation of a sports school.

**Moderator:** By what principle were the CAG members selected?

**Respondent 1:** First, our city was divided into 13 sites, one of which was I am from. Now for each site there is a Coordinator. The 13 sites are incorporated in into 6 micro-areas. At the given time in Yeghagnadzor there are 6 Coordinators. The link between urban authorities and residents of the micro-areas is the Coordinators. Thus, in each micro-area the Coordinators call meetings during which the most pressing problems confronting the majority of the residents in a given micro-area are identified.

**Respondent 2:** Further, after selection from a list of the problems the most urgent problems, a group of the most active people was chosen.

**Respondent 3:** When we learned that the organization Save the Children was interested in starting this program, the active people decided to address to Save the Children about the problems we had already solved. Save the Children required us to form a civil action group that will implement projects after being publicly elected.

**Moderator:** So, who was included in the structure of the CAG?

**Respondent 1:** As the project was related to construction, the structure of the CAG basically included the experts in the field of construction.

**Respondent 2:** Not only were experts included in CAG, but authoritative and interested people were also since it is necessary to have authoritative people to organize community work. But what I mean by authoritative people does not mean people from Yerevan. Authoritative people are those who, over the long years of work and truth have served to our city. These are chiefs of various establishments that have contributed to the development of city are well know by residents as good organizers, diligent and honorable people.

**Moderator:** What functions were assigned to the CAG?

**Respondent 1:** Well, first, ensuring the completion of the project. The second was liability, that is, accountability. In particularly I have organized work so that the foremen brought the construction materials to the correct place from which I personally supplied to the builders. I always recorded all information on these transactions, such as how much had been received, how much was necessary for the builders, and how much I gave out.

**Respondent 2:** In addition, the CAG supervised all the completion of the project during the entire period of time; watching and observing all the terms of the work.

**Respondent 3:** The CAG also supervised the quality of the work. Each month the CAG Coordinator signed the orders concerning the done work. Any poor-quality work found was changed immediately.

**Moderator:** In your opinion, how has the CAG executed its mission?

**Respondent 1:** For example in one project it was not so successfully because water from some roofs continues to leak. And, we have a courtyard in awful condition because the water from the roofs flows down into the courtyard forming huge, impassable pools.

**Moderator:** What factor negatively has affected quality of the done work?

**Respondent 1:** I think it was insufficient financing.

**Respondent 2:** We did not receive the actual amount the project needed. When we requested the actual costs needed to do the necessary quality of work, we often received the answer, "the total sum you request can not be allocated." I think, if the roofs would be inclined more, the leak would not occur. Unfortunately funds were not sufficient.

**Respondent 3:** However, the rest the project worked out well. Even during in the Soviet time, when buildings underwent rehabilitation the entrances were not done so well. Today visitors coming into the building express the satisfaction and delight.

**Moderator:** The interview team observed several projects in which the activity CAG was not so effective. What factors do you associate with the success of your CAG?

**Respondent 1:** I assume it is because the local authorities did not interfere with implementation of the project. All works were undertaken by the CAG, which worked with the public in the beginning and was submitted by those who were really interested in doing the project.

**Respondent 2:** All of us well realized that we were working for ourselves and we were solving the problem.

**Moderator:** And, on the whole, what were the mutual relations with the local authorities? Was there some type of cooperation?

**Respondent 1:** In the construction of the irrigation system the city government ensured and supplied 10-15% contribution to the project. This was there main intervention.

**Respondent 2:** If there was an intervention, by the local authorities it was only positive. For example, we decided to construct a small swimming pool. However members of the CAG offered to increase its volume so that in the summer children would have an opportunity to float. To do this required the invaluable help rendered by the urban authorities.

**Moderator:** Did you have cooperation from Mazpetaran?

**Respondent 1:** The Mazpetaran did not have any relation with the implementation of our projects.

**Moderator:** During the implementation and after the completion of the project, how have the members of the CAG implemented other projects in your city, cooperate among themselves, or exchange experience?

**Respondent 1:** Our project at the present time is in process of being completed (rehabilitation of a sports school) and today is the first time we have met with the members CAG of other projects.

**Respondent 2:** Our CAG members have already of completed projects and have occasionally met in this hall, discussed problems, and had difference experiences of success and failures.

**Moderator:** Will your CAG continue after the completion of the project?

**Respondent 1:** The CAG (repairing roofs of apartments) has already repaired our courtyard. I think with the establishment of a condominium association the problem of an accomplishment of courtyard will be solved more successfully.

**Respondent 2:** Our CAG does not have the experience of an independent decision of any problems. However, from time to time we discuss problems of our community and search for ways to resolved them.

**Moderator:** What is needed at this time to help CAGs more successful complete their functions and activities?

**Respondent 1:** Our CAG has participated in seminars organized by Save the Children where we have learned to make the proposals and search for donors. Today we require only financing since our efforts to find a donor has not been successful.

**Respondent 2:** If there will be a financing our CAG is ready to begin its role today.

**Moderator:** What problems are of up most importance today in your community and require a prompt decision?

**Respondent 1:** Our most urgent problems are improvement of streets and courtyards --they are in an emergency condition-- and electrification.

**Respondent 2:** Ours is creation of employment, work that would help people provide for themselves and their family.

**Respondent 3:** Erecting a drinking water line for the Noravan micro-area.

**Moderator:** Many thanks.

c. *Community Needs by 43 Communities.*

Communities	Irrigation system	Potable water	School	Kinder-garten	Cultural center	Sports school	Road	Park	Sanitation	Gas	Roofing	Ambulance	Children art center
<b>VAYOTZ DZOR MARZ</b>													
Eghegnadzor		X			X	X							
Agarakadzor			X	X									
Getap	X	X	X	X									
Karaglukh	X				X		X			X			
Artabuink	X	X	X				X						
Hors	X	X					X						
Salli	X	X			X								
Kechut				X	X		X						
Saravan	X						X						
Vaik					X		X						
Jermuk							X						
Eghegis	X								X				
<b>GEGHARKUNIK MARZ</b>													
Sevan					X	X		X					
Sarukhan		X					X						
Lanjaghpiur	X	X		X			X						
Gegharkunik		X		X	X		X						
Gandzak	X	X			X		X						
Tsak Kar		X	X	X	X								
Astkhadzor	X	X	X	X	X							X	
Vaghashen	X	X	X									X	
Gavar			X				X	X					
<b>LORI MARZ</b>													
Alaverdi					X	X		X	X				
Vanadzor							X						
Stepanavan				X			X						X
Gargar		X	X							X			
Koches	X			X	X								
Gyulagarak		X		X									
Metsavan									X	X			
Norashen		X			X								
Tashir													
Dashtadem													
<b>SYUNIK MARZ</b>													
Goris		X	X	X	X		X		X				
Verishen		X	X				X	X					
Sisian	X	X		X				X					X
Bnunis		X	X						X				
<b>SHIRAK MARZ</b>													
Artik			X			X	X						
Ani	X	X					X	X	X		X		X
Gyumri			X				X		X				
Akhuryan		X		X	X	X	X		X				
Voskehask		X	X		X								
Pemzashen		X	X		X					X			
Dzorakap		X			X	X	X		X				
Kharaberd		X			X				X				